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Digital Games

**Go West Across America with Lewis & Clark!**

**http://www.nationalgeographic.com/west/**

Analyze the following components:

a. Grade level(s) and subject areas (s): Middle school and U.S. History

b. Purpose of the game e.g., build skills or content knowledge or entertainment: Build content knowledge

c. Components of the game including

* rules: Enter your name when prompted. Make a choice between two options when presented and/or select ‘onward’. Game ends when you reach the Pacific Ocean.
* goals or objectives: To assist Lewis and Clark in reaching the Pacific Ocean through making choices such as navigation direction.
* outcomes and feedback: After each choice the game describes why your choice was either correct or incorrect. All possible outcomes end in reaching the Pacific Ocean.
* conflict or cooperation: game is played passively (player makes decisions, a little like Oregon Trail) but never has direct conflict. If your decision was the wrong one sometimes the narrative will say something like “Lewis and Clark disagreed with your advice”.
* types of interactions: passive. Player is not a true character in the game.
* storyline: The player is a “private” on the expedition. The player is involved at seven different decision points. Whether the player makes the correct or incorrect decision is irrelevant. The game will correct the player, ensuring that the expedition reaches the Pacific Ocean.

d. Benefits: Players get a glimpse at life with Lewis and Clark. Interactions with Native American Indians are fairly genuine, implying that there was Indian trading and a routine way of life in the West (as opposed to emptiness). There are also little icons that come up at different steps that have additional information to add, such as details about Indian chiefs.

e. Challenges: Players don’t get to make too many choices. More choices would increase the education benefit derived in this game. There is also a lot of information supplied in this game which can be easily forgotten. To really use this game well, it would be a good idea to accompany it with a handout with questions that take it to a deeper level. Otherwise the technology is easy to use and is attractive and entertaining.